

Hours of Business

The Assembly sits for approximately 14 weeks per year [42 days].

Sitting days -

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The Assembly meets at **10.30am—12.30pm** then again between **2.30pm. - 6.30pm.** However, the Assembly may rise later as it often debates matters well into the evening.

Question Time

Question Time occurs every sitting day at 2.30pm. It usually lasts one hour. During Question Time the non-Executive Members [Members who are not Ministers] can ask the Ministers two questions without notice- one main question and one supplementary on the same topic.

Daily Program

The Daily Program lists the business the Assembly expects to get through on a sitting day. It is similar to the agenda of a business meeting. It is posted on the Assembly website after **9.30am** on a sitting day.

The Notice Paper

The Notice Paper is the formal agenda of the Assembly. The Notice Paper lists all the unfinished business of the Assembly.

The Business of Committees

The Business of Committees is the Notice Paper that relates to committee activities. It includes details of committee membership, terms of reference, current inquiries and reports tabled.

The Minutes of Proceedings

The Minutes of Proceedings is the official record of all the decisions taken by the Assembly on a sitting day. It is loaded onto the website within two hours of the House rising.

Hansard

Hansard is the verbatim record of the speeches by Members in the House.

All these papers can be accessed via the Assembly website at—

www.parliament.act.gov.au

Legislative Assembly
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THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE ACT

HISTORY IN BRIEF

With Federation of all Australian States in 1901, the search was on for the national capital—a place for the site of the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia.

In 1911, the Federal Capital Territory, a site not within 100 miles of Sydney, was established. The name Canberra, which is an Aboriginal word for “meeting place”, was named in 1913. Federal Parliament sat in Melbourne until it moved to Parliament House, Canberra, in 1927.

The A.C.T. was governed by the Commonwealth Parliament—through the Minister for Territories, under Section 122 of the Constitution—until 11 May 1989, when self-government began.

However, from the early days residents of the A.C.T. wanted a say in how the A.C.T. was run. So from the 1930's, Advisory Councils were formed that could advise the Commonwealth Minister on matters concerning Canberra. Individuals were appointed or elected to the Advisory Councils.

The councils had no real power as they could only advise. Initially representatives were appointed, but by 1974 Canberra had a fully elected advisory council—called the *House of Assembly*—consisting of 18 part-time, elected representatives, who were elected by interested citizens.

In 1978, a referendum was held to ask the people of Canberra if they wanted to remain under the administration of the Commonwealth Government. 63% voted in favour of the Commonwealth.

However, this was overturned with the election of Bob Hawke, the Labor Prime Minister, in 1983, whose election campaign promised self-government for the A.C.T.

The 1st Legislative Assembly sat in May 1989, with 17 full-time members.

Hare-Clark Electoral System

Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly are elected using a proportional representation electoral system known as the Hare-Clark system. This system was chosen by voters in a referendum in 1992.

The Hare-Clark electoral system is named after an English lawyer, Sir Thomas Hare, and Andrew Inglis Clark, a Tasmanian parliamentarian between 1887 and 1892, who modified it and introduced it into Tasmania in 1897.

The Hare-Clark system is a proportional representation electoral system. It is known as the **single transferable vote system**.

Electors show their preferences for individual candidates and to be elected candidates need to receive a **quota** of votes. Each elector has a single vote and their vote can be transferred from candidate to candidate, according to the preferences shown, on their ballot paper, until all the vacancies are elected.

The ACT is divided into 3 multi-member electorates—Ginninderra, Molonglo and Brindabella. A total of **17** members are elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly—**5** each from Ginninderra and Brindabella and **7** from Molonglo.



THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The First Assembly—(1989-1991)

The A.C.T. Legislative Assembly first sat on 11 May, 1989. Rosemary Follett [ALP] was the first Chief Minister. Trevor Kaine [Lib] was the first Leader of the Opposition.

Other parties represented in the first Assembly included the:-

Abolish Self-Government Coalition [1 Member];
No Self-Government Party [3 Members]; and
the Residents Rally [4Members].

Governance in the A.C.T.

There are 3 arms of governance in the A.C.T.-

• The Legislature

-consists of the **17 elected representatives** and is responsible for making the laws that govern the A.C.T. The Assembly has the power to -

-elect a Chief Minister -make laws
-review the actions of government; and
-oversee the financial matters of the Government..

• The Executive

-is made up of the Chief Minister and up to 4 Ministers, appointed by the Chief Minister. The Executive is responsible for the good governance of the A.C.T. through the A.C.T. Public Service. The Executive [or Cabinet] also develop the A.C.T. budget.

• The Judiciary

- consists of the A.C.T. Supreme Court and the A.C.T. Magistrates Court. The Judiciary is responsible for ensuring the rule of law. It is an independent body. It deals with civil, criminal or administrative actions.



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